

Kunsan holds POW/MIA day remembrance

*By Airman 1st Class Brian Hill
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

The 8th Fighter Wing observed POW/MIA Day with a memorial service Sept. 21 at the base flagpole outside of Bldg. 1305.

About 100 people volunteered to participate in the event, and more than 500 people turned out to witness the ceremony, according to Tech. Sgt. John Stone, project coordinator.

Colonel Burt Field, 8th Fighter Wing commander, noted several members of the Wolf Pack have relatives still listed as missing from the Vietnam War.

"For me personally, these are men who aren't just names on a memorial wall," he said. "They were the fathers of close childhood friends. I used to think they were just ordinary dads.

"But they were not ordinary. They and other missing personnel and former POWs were extraordinary Americans who believed in something larger than themselves and who held fast to those beliefs no matter what the trial, the challenge or the sacrifice," he said.

Field told a story about Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a former prisoner of war in North Vietnam. A fellow cellmate of McCain's fashioned an American flag from scraps of handkerchiefs and scarves using a bamboo needle.

The flag was discovered by the North Vietnamese and was destroyed – the man who made the flag was beaten. When placed back in his cell, he simply began making another.

"Now," Field quoted McCain, "when you recite the Pledge of Allegiance, never forget the sacrifice and courage of thousands of Americans who have built our nation and who promote freedom around the world. We must always remember our duty, our honor and



Photos by Senior Airman Lanie McNeal

Two members of the Wolf Pack honor guard salute the wreath placed at the foot of the base flagpole with Col. Burt Field, 8th Fighter Wing commander, during the POW/MIA Day memorial ceremony Sept. 21.

our country."

Chaplain (Maj.) Thomas Azar, 8th Fighter Wing chapel, led Wolf Pack members in a prayer for the "more than 6,000 new MIAs" - victims of the recent terrorist attacks against the United States.

A wreath-laying at the foot of the flagpoles ended the ceremony as F-16s did a fly-

over in a "missing man" formation and taps was played.

Prior to the event, 75 Wolf Pack members volunteered to take 20-minute shifts standing at parade rest under the U.S., South Korean and POW/MIA flags flying at half-staff, Stone said.

At the O'Malley Dining Facility, a table set for one sat empty throughout the day in remembrance of military and civilian members who've not returned home.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Morrison

Members of the 80th Fighter Squadron "JUVATS", pay respects to their fallen service member's Sept. 21 during the 8th Fighter Wing's POW/MIA Day memorial ceremony.



Members of the Wolf Pack honor guard perform the 21-gun salute during the POW/MIA Day memorial ceremony Sept. 21 at the base flagpole.

See more photos from the POW/MIA day memorial ceremony on Page 8